



9110-04-P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

Docket No. USCG-2015-0980

Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, South Branch of the Elizabeth River, Portsmouth and Chesapeake, VA

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of deviation from drawbridge regulations.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard has issued a temporary deviation from the operating schedule that governs the Belt Line Railroad Bridge across the South Branch of the Elizabeth River, mile 2.6, between Portsmouth and Chesapeake, VA. This deviation allows the bridge to remain in the closed-to-navigation position to facilitate a tie replacement project.

DATES: This deviation is effective without actual notice from [***Insert date of publication in the Federal Register***] until 7 p.m. on November 5, 2015. For the purposes of enforcement, actual notice will be used from 11 a.m. on October 29, 2015, until [***Insert date of publication in the Federal Register***].

ADDRESSES: The docket for this deviation, [USCG-2015-0980], is available at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Type the

docket number in the "SEARCH" box and click "SEARCH". Click on Open Docket Folder on the line associated with this deviation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions on this temporary deviation, call or e-mail Mr. Hal R. Pitts, Bridge Administration Branch Fifth District, Coast Guard; telephone (757) 398-6222, e-mail Hal.R.Pitts@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Norfolk and Portsmouth Belt Line Railroad Company, who owns and operates the Belt Line Railroad Bridge, has requested a temporary deviation from the current operating regulations to facilitate a tie replacement project on the bridge. The bridge is a vertical lift draw bridge and has a vertical clearance in the closed position of 6 feet above mean high water.

The current operating schedule is set out in 33 CFR 117.997(a). Under this temporary deviation, the bridge will remain in the closed-to-navigation position from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., except for scheduled daily openings at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., from October 29, 2015 through November 5, 2015. During this temporary deviation, the bridge will operate per 33 CFR 117.997(a) from 7 p.m. to 11 a.m. The South Branch of the Elizabeth River is used by a variety of vessels including deep draft ocean-going vessels, U. S. government vessels, small commercial vessels, recreational vessels and tug and barge traffic. The Coast Guard has carefully coordinated the restrictions with commercial and recreational waterway users.

Vessels able to pass through the bridge in the closed position may do so at anytime. The bridge will be able to open for emergencies and there is no alternate route for vessels unable to pass through the bridge in the closed position. The Coast Guard will also inform the users of the waterways through our Local and Broadcast Notice to Mariners of the change in operating schedule for the bridge so that vessels can arrange their transits to minimize any impacts caused by this temporary deviation.

In accordance with 33 CFR 117.35(e), the drawbridge must return to its regular operating schedule immediately at the end of the effective period of this temporary deviation. This deviation from the operating regulations is authorized under 33 CFR 117.35.

Dated: October 27, 2015.

Hal R. Pitts
Bridge Program Manager
Fifth Coast Guard District

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